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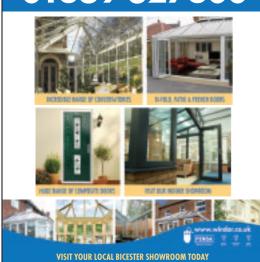
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More than 100 police officers raid ten homes across town

Naomi Herring nherrina@nao.com

MORE than 100 police officers stormed ten homes across Banbury yesterday morning in a series of

raids over child sex offences.

Thames Valley Police sent about 120 officers to carry out the raids and as a result arrested seven men in connection with child exploitation offences.

The offences relate to three female victims in Banbury between 2008 and 2015. Local Police Area Commander for Banbury, Supt Kath Lowe, said: "The nature of these arrests may appear con-cerning and I understand that people

may have questions about them.
"Because this is an ongoing investigation, we will not be able to provide all the information straight away, but we will keep the community updated when we can.

"Tackling child sexual exploitation, both non recent and current, remains an absolute priority for Thames Valley Police and this complex investigation and today's arrests demonstrate this.



About 120 Thames Valley Police officers raided ten homes across Banbury in connection with child sex offences

"The news of these warrants today could remind people of something that has happened to them in the past which they wish to report to us."

The raids were carried out by Thames Valley Police as part of Operation Nautical.

Alongside the ten properties raided

by police today, there was also one property raided in Birmingham.

The force said the men arrested were aged between 21 and 42 and remain in custody.

Det Supt Paul Havles, head of Force CID, said: "This morning, our officers executed search warrants at 11 properties as part of Operation Nautical.

"This is a complex investigation into

non-recent child sexual exploitation in

Banbury which has been undertaken by Thames Valley Police Force CID.

"Following the arrests we are continuing to work with our partners to safeguard and support the victims."

Anyone who has concerns regarding

offences relating to child sexual exploitation is asked to contact police on 101.

For more information on what to do if you have concerns see bit.ly/20cmaAD



Printed and published by Newsquest Oxfordshire, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EJ. Tel: 01865 425362. Newspaper Sales Department 01865 425282. Direct Delivery 0800 028 4592.

'We won't let our theatre hope die'

Campaigners vow to push for performance space despite plan for Grand

Hannah Somerville hsomerville@nqo.com

BANBURY needs to 'up its game' and push for multipurpose performance venues for the whole town, campaigners have said.

The historic Grand Theatre in Broad Street is set to be turned into two shops and 12 flats following a planning decision by Cherwell District Council this month.

Its art deco frontage dating back to the 1930s will be retained but other parts of the building, a former Egyptian cinema, can now be flattened by developers.

Colin Clarke, Cherwell's lead member for planning, said there were 'clear social and economic benefits' to making more housing and retail space available.

He said: "This building was once a cinema and theatre. However, it has not had these uses for some time and this application does not bring about the direct loss of an entertainment facility

"The proposals put forward by the applicant are sensitive to the fact that this is a locally listed



are, from left, Rob Kinchin-Smith, Suzette Neptune, John Havwood and Kieron Galliard

outside the

Theatre in

Banbury's

Broad Street

former Grand

building and they will help preserve the historic character of its frontage."
The two shop spaces will face on

to Broad Street and the flats split over two three-storey blocks, one of which will face on to Pepper

Members of a 3,000-strong campaign to retain The Grand as an arts venue were disappointed by the decision but have vowed to continue the fight.

Spokesman Rob Kinchin-Smith

said: "What I was disappointed by was that the committee didn't believe that any use for that building apart from shops and flats was viable.

"To say that an entertainment venue that owns its building outright, doesn't have to pay busi ness rates and some tax, and could use volunteer labour, is unviable doesn't seem to show a lot

of confidence in our town centre becoming a vibrant place. I don't know what this says for the future of our town centre.

But he added that members of the campaign, which included Cherwell Theatre Company, Odyssey Theatrical Productions and Banbury Presents, were far from defeated.

He said: "All the performance groups and others who have sup-ported Friends of the Grand continue to believe Banbury needs somewhere for multi-purpose performance.
"Certainly the campaign will

continue. If the Grand does get converted we will just continue to look at other properties.

'We need to up our game. We need to show that what we be-lieve the town centre needs is viable. Others need to be con-

Boa constrictor found in field

AN 8ft-long boa constrictor was found in an Oxfordshire field by a dog

walker. The unsuspecting pet owner spotted the giant tropical reptile in a field near a housing estate in Banbury while walking his dog on Saturday.

From snout to tail tip it measures 8ft 6in, and

weighs 12.2kg.
The RSPCA was called to collect the snake, but how it ended up in the field

remains a mystery.

Deputy chief inspector Melanie Fisher said: "If anyone thinks they may know who this snake belongs to then we would urge them to get in touch with us by calling our inspectorate appeal line on 0300 123 8018.

"It's hard to know for sure how this snake came to be in the field but I think the caller got a bit of a surprise. It's not everyday you stumble upon an 8ft snake while out walking

the dog. "The snake may have escaped from a vivarium or may have been abandoned. Sadly she's not microchipped so we do not know where she has come from. She is still in our care and is now doing really well despite the cold weather."

Snakes are not able to produce their own body heat so being outdoors in the UK, especially during



This 8ft boa constrictor snake was found by a dog walker in a field near Banbury

cold weather, can be a serious threat to a boa as their bodies cannot function normally outside the correct temperature range. Ms Fischer said the

RSPCA was seeing a growing number of exotic animals - including snakes

being abandoned.
The increase is thought to

be down to a rise in ambitious pet owners biting off more than they can chew in adopting tropical wildlife.

The charity currently has dozens of boas in its care looking for new but experienced homes, and urged prospective buyers to do their research before getting one.





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Dance school faced with finding new home after rent rises at Mill

learning disabilities is facing the jarring prospect of moving out of its Banbury home after 25 years because it has failed to come to an agreement on rent.

The internationally-known Anjali Dance Company has launched a frantic search for a new home as it prepares to leave The Mill Arts

The charity, which exists entirely on grant funding and donations, can no longer afford its office rent and studio hire charges.
Nicole Thomson, Anjali's founder

and artistic director, said: "This is a difficult time for us.
"We are able to keep working

while we find other premises but having to move out of The Mill is a major disruption to our activities."

The change has come about as The

Mill, which is now an indepedent charity, and Anjali have been unable to agree the terms of a new lease.

The dance group is now looking for both a new base and a new partner organisation to work with

It needs to find a new local premises from the start of April while weekly classes are being temporarily held at the Banbury Style Acre hub.

During its 25 years at the Mill, Anjali has taught regular dance classes for people of all ages with learning disabilities.

Dancers performed at the opening of the new arts centre in 1992 in front of the **Duchess of** Gloucester and were introduced to the Queen when she visited Banbury in 2008.

They have also performed at the Royal Opera House in



Members of Anjali Dance Company; below, founder and artistic director Nicole Thomson

Wells, and danced at the flame-lighting ceremony of the 2012 London Paralympics. Ms Thomson said: "All our work has been done at the Mill and it is a great pity to have to particularly at a point where we have such exciting plans for the future. set up the UK's first learning-disabled dance company here and our recognition and achievements in disabled performing arts in the UK and abroad must have greatly enhanced the Mill's reputation.

"This seems to be all about money, but there are some things you can't put a price on."
Use of The Mill's office

accommodation, dance studio and services would have cost £34,725 a year, with standard discounts for community users and long-term hirers reducing this to £18,437. But in an official statement, The Mill pointed out it has only been

charging Anjali £6,000 a year. It said: "The Mill is unable to continue subsidy at this level as we move through a new phase of

incorporated organisation. Over a period of time and after several meetings with Anjali representatives, Anjali were offered several alternative new terms which we hoped would meet their needs."

Anjali was eventually offered a maximum use of the dance studio for three days a week and 32 weeks a year costing £16,153 and with a unique discount of £1,577.

The Mill's statement added: "Each of our offers were framed in an attempt to meet Anjali's stated needs and each has been rejected.

"We very much hope that Anjali's trustees will be able to find alternative accommodation within a reasonable travel distance for the dancers who we understand pay for their training and are located in various parts of the UK."

Dining in the dark for guide dogs

ADDERBURY parish councillors as well as Banbury MP Victoria Prentis sat down to 'dine in the dark' with a local guide dog user in an awareness-raising exercise.

The event at the new Adderbury Fields development saw eight guests eat a twocourse lunch while blindfolded and take on a series of everyday tasks such as counting money, colouring and completing a jigsaw in glasses replicating various visual impairments.

The event was laid on by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association with community fundraiser Felicity Stratton talking about the important work guide

Mrs Prentis said the experience had been 'really interesting', adding: 'Even the most basic things we take for granted can become difficult and frustrating.'

The MP also proved there's no place like home when she stayed in North Oxfordshire to celebrate her birthday.

She visited Bicester restaurant Cabbages and Condoms to celebrate turning 46.

Mrs Prentis took to Twitter to thank her constituents for the good wishes and gave thanks for the lovely meal.

Dance to health

DANCE classes dedicated to preventing

falls are set to stay in Banbury.
A pilot scheme called Dance to Health has finished a successful six-month trial and will now extend classes.

Weekly sessions take place at Woodgreen Leisure Centre, offering older people the chance to stave off falls by staying active.

Funding from Oxfordshire Community Foundation helped to sustain the classes To join or enquire call Karen on 0797

Link road motion

A MOTION for a new link road in Banbury has been agreed by Oxfordshire County Council.

Labour councillor Mark Cherry put forward the motion to consider the proposal connecting Bankside to Overthorpe Road.

He said the idea will now be considered before plans, feasibility studies and a consultation takes place.

Johnson supports hospital campaig

Letter from former Health Secretary opposes service cuts

Hannah Somerville

THE former Health Secretary who waded into a battle to save the Horton General Hospital in 2008 has lent his support to the current campaign.

In a letter to district councillor Sean Woodcock, MP Alan Johnson backed efforts by Labour Party members to

spread the word about cur-rent proposed changes.

He recalled that in 2008 the decision to downgrade maternity and children's ser-vices was referred to him by the county's health overview and scrutiny committee.

The Labour politician said in his letter: "I referred the issue to the Government's Independent Remuneration Panel, which was clinicallyled, and whose report recom-mended that the Horton General Hospital must continue to serve the local community in North Oxfordshire, and that the local trust's proposals failed to provide an accessible or improved service for

local people.

"Far from closing down or downgrading any of these services, I supported the IRP's recommendation."

Plans to restructure the way the local NHS is delivered are being consulted on up until Sunday, April 9, by Oxfordshire Clinical Com-missioning Group (OCCG).

They include proposals to run more outpatient and diagnostic appointments at the

Horton but at the expense of consultant-led maternity and the special care baby

On Saturday, Labour activists took to Banbury market place to talk to shoppers and traders about issues affecting the NHS.

Party member Joseph Walsh said: "Many people we spoke to were not only con-cerned about the future of the Horton but of the NHS in general and were supportive of our campaigning. Contin-ued cuts to the NHS and social care are having a deep impact on the lives of ordi-nary Banbury people."

This week OCCG issued a reminder to everyone in the

county to have their say on the proposals, which form phase one of a two-part consultation.

A series of 15 public events

have been held on the plans have been held on the plans in Oxfordshire over the past few months, attended by more than 1,300 people and including two in Banbury. Phase one deals primarily with cuts to the number of acute hospital back as well as

acute hospital beds as well as the centralisation of stroke

the centralisation of stroke care and some critical care. OCCG chief executive David Smith said: "There is still plenty of time for people to read our proposals and share their views via the survey.

"We thank everyone who has attended the public meetings and for commenting on the proposals, which aim to ensure safe and high quality

healthcare for everyone.
"No decisions will be taken until the consultation is complete and the public feedback has been considered.'

Visit tinyurl.com/gkvjntd Victoria Prentis column: P10



Work together plea to save









WILDLIFE in Oxfordshire has suffered 'serious decline' over the past two decades and urgent action is needed to save it before some species disappear completely.

That is the conclusion of the first ever comprehensive survey of the state of nature in the county.

More of the species measured were found to be declining in numbers rather than increasing, and the nightingale, turtle dove and adder are now close to extinction in Oxfordshire.

More than 60 wildlife experts and 40 environmental organisations contributed data on species and habitats dating back more than 20 years for the inaugural Oxfordshire State of Nature Report.

The project was co-ordinated by Wild Oxfordshire, a small group of nature-loving volunteers who now want to persuade the authorities to help save the county's green 'crown jewels'.

Programme manager Hilary Phillips, who led the report, said: "On the whole, things are declining at a scary rate.

"When young people are saying to us maybe there won't be hedgehogs around when I grow up', we should definitely be wor-

"We wanted to raise awareness of the jewels in the crown of Oxfordshire's environment such as our rare plants: we have got our plants where ours is the only population in the country and people are working very hard to look after them.

"We wanted to raise awareness

of what we have got but also how it could be so much better." Among the 'jewels in the crown' are creeping marshwort, which only grows in two places in the country including Oxford.

Nightingales, adders and turtle doves are all disappearing: the first ever Oxfordshire State of Nature report, led by Wild Oxfordshire, warns that the county's wildlife has suffered 'serious decline' and calls for urgent action. **Environment reporter PETE HUGHES reports**



Oxfordshire conservationists have also been able to rescue the water vole in the county, and while numbers in the rest of the UK plummeted by 95 per cent in the past century, in Oxfordshire its range has increased three fold in recent years.

But other species are still disappearing: nightingales, adders and turtle doves are all close to extinction in the county and entire habitats such as grassland and rivers are at 'huge risk', the report concluded.

The blame has been pointed largely at modern farming practices: massive fields of single crops and hedgerows being pulled up to create larger, more

efficient spaces. Studies have shown that this decimates biodiversity and has a disproportionately negative effect on wildlife. But these practices, along with

housing developments, also fragment the landscape and isolate populations.

One of the surprising conclusions of the study was that Oxford and the county's towns and villages have become a 'last refuge' for many species such as hedgehogs, badgers and swifts fleeing the carving up of coun-

tryside. Yet even those urban refugees are being squeezed out of existence as garden fences, walls and new building break up the ur-

county's wildlife treasures



Wild Oxfordshire managers Hilary Philips, Sian Liwicki and Anne Miller present their State of Nature report to Witney MP Robert Courts at Combe Mill in Woodstock; below, a common skimmer dragonfly snapped at the BBOWT Nature Reserve, Whitecross Green Wood near Arncott by Norman Green and a turtle dove photographed by Derek Lane

ban environment even more.

Mrs Phillips said: "The envi-ronment comes at the bottom of a lot of peoples' shopping lists and it needs to be shouted

The report lists eight 'key actions' for local authorities to help enforce:

- Urgently create larger and more connected areas of high quality habitats.
- Help farmers to find financially viable ways of managing land to provide greater benefits to nature.
- Improve practical advice and support for communities and landowners.
- Ensure better planning for open water and green areas that benefit nature and people.
- Put sustainable development that invests in nature at the heart of local decision making.
- Increase access to green space and volunteering opportunities to keep people in touch with the health and wellbeing benefits of
- Develop more collaborations within our strong and diverse environment sector.

 • Continue to improve the
- methodology for monitoring the state of nature across Oxfordshire.

Mrs Phillips said: "What we need is more collaboration within the environment sector but also with other sectors

"It is no good us just talking to each other, we can't do it on our

"We all have to work together." The report was launched last week in a ceremony at Blenheim Palace, but Wild Oxfordshire will also be issuing it to local councils, MPs and other organisations to try and foster more awareness of what each can do to help the environment.





OXFORDSHIRE'S WILDLIFE IN NUMBERS

- 146 UK legally protected species
- 260 species recognised as conservation
- 162 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- 362 Local Wildlife Sites
- 26 per cent of the county is in an Area

of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): Chilterns, North Wessex Downs, Cotswolds

- 7 special areas of conservation (SACs)
- 222 environmental groups
 3 per cent of Oxfordshire's 1,700 native and long-established plants have not been seen since 2000





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6

Motorbike sales legend was also race track star

Stuart Rust srust@ngo.com

A LEGEND in the world of motorsport and motorcycle sales has passed away at the age of

92.
William Edward 'Eddie' Dow, of Sulgrave near Banbury, was nationally renowned for motorbike sales throughout the second half of the 20th century.

of the 20th century.

He opened his first dealership on Banbury's Southam Road in 1951 selling British motorcycles, mainly BSA.

As a young man, he was also a successful motorcycle racer in his own right, leading the British Army's racing team during his service and famously triumphing in the 1955 senior clubman's TT on the Isle of Man.

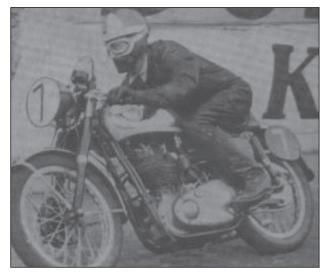
Mr Dow was born in Sunderland on June 26, 1924, to parents Albert and Hannah. His father was an engineer who worked on, among other things, the construction of the railway network in Argentina before and after the First World War.

fore and after the First World War. After school and following the start of the Second World War, Mr Dow took up an apprenticeship with Rolls Royce. In 1940, he was transferred to a factory training unit at Derby Technical College, where he received a national certificate in engineering. He was

Monday - Wednesday

Thursday

Friday



Eddie Dow in action

then moved to a workshop which tested all the ancillary units fitted to the Merlin engine, the power source for the Spitfire aircraft. After further experience work-

After further experience working on jet engines, he was called up for military service in July, 1945, just after his 21st hirthday

just after his 21st birthday.

He became the leader of the Brit-

ish Army motorcycle team in the period following the end of the war, making a name for himself initially as a trials rider, winning a number of medals individually and for the squad in international and national trials events.

and national trials events.

His victory in the 1955 senior clubman's TT on the Isle of Man

came just two years after a nearfatal crash that saw him break almost every bone in his body and spend six months in a Liverpool hospital.

In 1956, Mr Dow opened up a motorcycle shop in Banbury with Arthur Taylor, initially known as Taylor Dow Ltd. In 1962 the shop would be relaunched under his own name as Eddie Dow Ltd.

Mr Dow's Banbury business flourished and he became one of the best known BSA Gold Star specialists in the country. He met his first wife, Rita just af-

He met his first wife, Rita just after the war ended in 1946. Rita died in 2008. In his later life Mr Dow married Diane, with whom he saw out the rest of his days.

Mr Dow sold his business in 1991. Aged 67, he lived out a busy and fulfilling retirement in Sulgrave, pursuing interests as diverse as skiing (a hobby he maintained until the age of 88) and gardening. He always remained an irrepressible motorsport enthusiast.

He died on Friday, March 17, and is survived by his wife, Diane, daughter Franca, and grandchildren Justin, Kate and Joshua.

The funeral will take place on Monday, April 3, at 12pm at Banbury Crematorium. Mr Dow's family has requested no flowers, although donations to the Church of St James the Less, Sulgrave, will be release.

Airport coach to make final trips

THE coach link between Oxford and Birmingham Airport will complete its last journeys tomorrow – just eight



months after it started.

Oxford Bus Company's Airline service, which runs via Banbury and Warwick, launched in July last year to add to its Heathrow and Gatwick airport services.

The firm revealed last month the service had not carried enough passengers to cover its operational costs.

A direct train service runs between Oxford and Birmingham Airport in less than an hour

People who have multi-trip or period passes for the service that will still be valid after it stops running, can get a refund. They should post their ticket to Oxford Bus Company, Freepost OF336, Oxford OX4 6BR.

Pupils' own book

PUPILS at a North Oxfordshire school have entered the world of publishing with the launch of their own story book.

Mission to Marshmallow Moon has been written and illustrated by children at Sibford School in North Oxfordshire, with help from author Lee Sterry.

The story tells the tale of planet

The story tells the tale of planet Jibby Jobby, which is under threat from an asteroid.

Only by working together to create a rocket can the Jibby Jobians escape to a new planet, Marshmallow Moon.

Junior school head Edward Rossiters said: "We hope that as many parents as possible will buy copies of the book."



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Signal box is flattened but contents are safe

A PIECE of history was erased from the map at the weekend with the dismantling of the Banbury North Signal Box

The demolition marked the closing chapter in a long saga to save the signal box that culminated in a highly successful heritage project, with thousands shown around the site.

Campaigners watched from a

bridge as the box, dating from 1901, was reduced to rubble. It's part of Network Rail's project to replace hundreds of signal boxes Regional Operating Centres

(ROCs).

Protesters struck a deal with the firm to run a series of tours and educational days at the signal box and salvage all of its equipment and materials before it was flattened.

Rob Kinchin-Smith, an active member of the campaign and former chairman of Banbury Civic Society, said: "It was an undoubted huge success.

"More than 3,000 people came

through the box, which resulted in the entire contents of the box being saved for heritage re-use."

Mr Kinchin-Smith and other members of the community gathered on the railway bridge on Sunday night to watch the demolition.

Ahead of the event he said he

had 'absolutely no idea' how many people would be coming

> was 'not necessarily what people want to see'. But he

added: "We hope people will conserve their happy memories of having had the chance to see the inside. Members

of the campaign to preserve the box took to social media on Sunday to share their memories

of the century-old space. Posting on Facebook, Gareth Parry said: "I think it's very sad to see beautiful things and places being destroyed all in the name of progress.
"I also enjoyed my visit to

Banbury North in August. This was my second visit."



The signal box being dismantled on Sunday night; inset left, the **Banbury North** Signal Box Pictures: Rob Kinchin-Smith

Stalker sent his victim a hearse

Man, 54, is jailed for 14 months after making threatening calls following death of his mother

Annabal Bagdi abagdi@nqo.com

A STALKER who tricked funeral directors into believing his sister-in-law was dead has been locked up.

Andrew Lydiatt unleashed a year-long campaign of terror against Stella Lydiatt after struggling to cope with the death of his mother.

The 54-year-old, who had 38 previous convictions, also went on to wage war against his nephew Barry Lydiatt and niece Ellen Wright, publicly posting insulting Facebook messages

Sentencing at Oxford Crown Court, recorder Rhona Campbell jailed the offender for 14 months and issued a restraining order forbidding him from contacting his brother, wife and their two children. She added: "The psychological effect

of behaviour towards someone like this is a matter that is significant.'

The stalker called Ms Lydiatt at her Banbury home, shouting "it should have been you that died" and "bet you're glad she's dead", the day after his mother passed away in November 2015 2015

Lydiatt hurled further abuse at his brother Philip and his wife during two further calls, leaving Ms Lydiatt 'shaking like a leaf', prosecutor Henry James

The defendant continued to harass Ms Lydiatt with a number of calls, staying silent on the other end of the line after bothering his victim while she was home alone in the evenings.

A 'distressed' Ms Lydiatt would search her home in search of intruders after receiving the worrying calls, the court was told.

She was also woken by rattling, spotting undertakers from Banbury's Humphris Funerals outside her home after being sent there to collect her body by the stalker, who had pretended to be her husband.

A hearse from Co-op Funeralcare was also sent to her home by Lydiatt, the prosecutor revealed.

Both of Ms Lydiatt's children were left 'frightened and humiliated' when their uncle made public posts on Facebook, which included saying 'hope you all die'

The 'final straw' for Ms Lydiatt was when she contacted Humphris Funerals, discovering a second request to get undertakers to collect her body had been made by the defendant.

Defence barrister Robert Lindsey said Lydiatt, who appeared via video link from HMP Bullingdon and must pay a victim surcharge, was remorseful for his 'spiteful' offending.

Lydiatt, who has mental health difficulties, 'desperately wishes' for be-reavement counselling to come to terms with the deaths of both his parents, which he did not handle well, the barrister added.

The stalker's offending since 2015 was due to his binge drinking after battling an alcohol problem for some time, Dr Lindsey added.

Lydiatt, of Middleton Road, Banbury, admitted stalking Stella Lydiatt between November 4, 2015, and November

He also admitted four counts of sending a communication of an indecent or offensive nature.

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"All showroom goods, plus warehouse stock... and all new factory orders...will be clearly marked and available to you with bigger savings than ever in our history" Gary Bennett - Director

FULL DETAILS PUBLISHED *IN NEXT WEEK'S PAPER*

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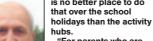
THE STORE IS PRESENTLY CLOSED WHILE WE COMPLETE ALL SALE PREPARATIONS

Keep children entertained with holiday hubs for Easter

for places at the next Cherwell District Council Easter holiday hubs next month.

Sports, arts and games will help keep schoolchildren entertained across Bicester, Banbury and Bloxham. They will run on weekdays from Monday, April 10, to Friday, April 21 excluding bank

Cherwell District Council deputy leader George Reynolds, pictured, said: "Now that spring is here, we are encouraging the district's children to get out and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine, and there



"For parents who are out at work, childcare can be a challenge during the holidays.

"By booking their children into the hubs, mums and dads can be

sure that their children are not only in safe hands but keeping fit and having fun."

Sessions will be held at The Cooper School in Bicester, North Oxfordshire Academy in Banbury and The Warriner School in Bloxham. For more details see cherwell.gov.uk/holidayactivities

Hospices set to benefit from funding in boost to charities

HOSPICE care in the county has received a cash boost alongside dementia and disability specialists.

The Midcounties Co-operative has pledged to help fund four Oxfordshire charities as part of a newly-announced partnership lasting all year. Palliative care experts Sobell House Hospice in Headington and Katharine House Hospice in Banbury will be among the charities to benefit from the company's fundraising and voluntary work.

Stuart Newman, leadership team ambassador at The Midcounties Co-operative in the county, said: "Our four new charity partners give crucial support to people in need across Oxfordshire and

improve the quality of their lives.'
The Wantage October Club has also been named as a charity partner, in support of its day centre care services for people living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Funding will help the club introduce activities such as bingo and indoor bowls.

War of words costs a 'wasteful' £400k



Clockwise, from top left, Bob Price, James Mills, Barry Wood, Ian Hudspeth, Matthew Barber, John Cotton

Councils are criticised as irresponsible over divisive 'super council' campaign

Matt Oliver

BICKERING council leaders insist £400,000 spent on a war of words about a 'super council' has not been wasted.

The figure was revealed after Freedom of Information requests by the *Banbury Cake* to the six biggest Oxfordshire authorities. thorities.

It lays bare the cash spent as

It lays bare the cash spent as they have locked horns over plans for a shake-up, with both sides spending tens of thou-sands of pounds on advertising, consultants and leaflets in the past year.

The 'super council' would replace Oxfordshire County Council, the four district councils and Oxford City Council, running all services under one roof and saving £20m a year – or £400,000

It is supported by the county council, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district council and – despite opposition from other authorities and most local MPs – they last week formally submitted the idea to Communities Secretary Sajid Javid.

They and their opponents rejected claims the £400,000 spent on campaigning for and against the proposals, respectively, was a waste of taxpayers' money. But Ian Green, of Oxford Civic

Society, branded them 'irresponsible' and said they should have 'sat down and talked' instead. He added: "This is not money

well-spent.
"Instead of talking to each

other, our local authorities have decided to spend £400,000 on justifying their disagreements.

"It is irresponsible for them to do that when they should be focusing on reaching a consensus.
"We are now in a situation

where a proposal supported by only three of the six main councils has gone to the Secretary of State [Mr Javid]. It is simply not good enough.

"What has been put forward is not sufficiently thorough – we

hope Mr Javid will send it back. "We want our authorities to sit down and talk to each other, not waste more taxpayers' money.

Figures disclosed to the Banbury Cake show the most was spent in total by Oxfordshire County Council, at £177,303.

However, this included a £100,000 report it commissioned last year from a consultancy to at options for how councils could be reorganised. A similar report was jointly

commissioned by the four districts and city council, also costing about £100,000.

The next biggest sums spent were £78,400 by Oxford City Council, £57,137 by West Oxfordshire, £31,866 by Cherwell, £31,610 by South Oxfordshire and £25,000 by Vale of White

The overall costs are likely to keep rising, with all of the authorities admitting they were poised to spend even more.

Matthew Barber, leader of Vale White Horse District Council, insisted cash used by his council was 'well-spent' if it resulted in a shake-up.

He added: "That money has

gone towards serious work that could make a real difference. If we pull it [reorganisation] off, then the savings will be

significant." And John Cotton, of South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "I completely understand £400,000 will be seen as a huge amount of money.

"But to put it into context, we hope to save the same amount every single week if the [super council plan] goes forward.

"I think that is a very good investment. Would it have been better if we all agreed? Of course it would."

County council leader Ian Hud-

speth said: "We commissioned thorough financial analysis and engaged the public to help us improve the proposal. As a result, we have a positive, workable plan to improve services and hand greater control over decision-making to local communities.

"While it is a lot of money, we believe we got good value and that the potential benefits are well worth the cost."
Oxford City Council leader

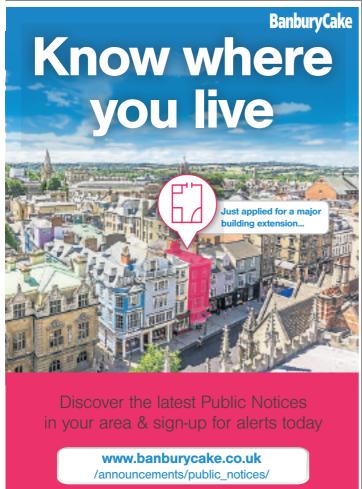
Bob Price, whose authority led the 'Hands off Oxford City' campaign and sent leaflets to thousands of city households, said: 'We were advised by the Government to commission studies to examine unitary council options. That expenditure was necessary if we were to put in a

successful bid [for devolution]." West Oxfordshire District Council leader James Mills said: "It is disappointing we have had to spend this money, because there are better things it could

have gone on."

Cherwell District Council leader Barry Wood did not return the Banbury Cake's calls.
A spokesman for the Depart-

ment of Communities and Local Government said any hids for a 'super council' would be given careful consideration.





TAKE YOUR CAREER TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Bicester Village Job Fair

Join Bicester Village at the John Paul II Centre in Bicester on Wednesday 5 April, from 4 pm until 6.30 pm. We are looking for candidates who can bring passion to a luxury, fast-moving retail environment. A number of boutiques and restaurants are seeking enthusiastic candidates who would like a new challenge or are looking to return to work. Retail experience is not essential - but passion is.

For more information and to register, visit BicesterVillage.com/jobfair







'Ambassadors' back hospice

A HOSPICE is building a dedicated band of supporters to spread word of its specialist care.

Sobell House is piecing together a team of

'ambassadors' to rally the community ahead of its £9m expansion project

It is the first time the Headington hospice has created the voluntary roles, which will promote palliative care and Sobell's plan for a new clinic and garden annex.

Natalia Baeva, pictured, from Somerton, said she was 'honoured' to be named the first ambassador in January, after a chance job unexpectedly led her to the hospice.

The 49-year-old, originally from Moscow, came to Sobell two years ago to translate for a Russian doctor during his week-long placement.
She said: "I was surprised at how

calming and peaceful it was. I thought 'what can I do to help?"

The mother-of-two started volunteering in March 2015 as a driver, picking up patients from their homes. Mrs Baeva is one of two ambassadors who have already signed up, but the hospice hopes to take on at least another four

Ambassadors are tasked with anything from cheque presentations, attending events. putting up posters or presenting at community events. To find out more call 01865 857007 or email libby. aley@sobellhospice.org



VictoriaPrentisWestminsterViews



We must carry on after London attacks

WAS in the midst of writing this month's column when the tragic incident at Westminster unfolded last Wednesday.

The attempted attack on our democracy was an act of evil and a terrible tragedy.

We owe a debt of gratitude to those who protect us; my thoughts and prayers are with the friends and families of those injured and bereaved, particularly those who knew PC Palmer.

However, we must remain undeterred and carry on with normal democratic life.

It was business as usual on Thursday morning: my Westminster staff and I were back in the office and my constituency staff got on with their tasks in Upper Heyford.

Much of their time recently has

been spent analysing the responses to my travel survey on journey times from the Horton to the John Radcliffe.

I have been overwhelmed by the number of those who have participated - 371 so far and more keep coming in by the day.

Although we have been told that it takes about 45 minutes to get from the north of the county to the John Radcliffe, my survey shows otherwise. Those doing the journey have

told me that, on average, it is taking around 90 minutes

This comes as no surprise: on the two journeys I have done with local journalists as part of the campaign it has taken me well over an hour on both occasions. Parking is even more varied: responses range from five minutes to an hour.

More than 10 people have said it

has taken them at least an hour to

Eighty-one per cent of respondents use a private car, many noting that public transport is simply not an option either because of timetabling issues or because they are physically unable to get on a bus.

I am afraid the results have done nothing to allay my concerns about

the Transformation Programme proposals. Using journey times courtesy of Google Maps does not constitute a robust evidence base.

It is simply not good enough; real life experiences should inform decisions about the future organisation of healthcare in Oxfordshire.

The safety of our mothers and their babies is paramount, yet I am fearful for the future if my survey results are not given the attention they deserve.

I will be making my views clear in my own submission and would encourage all my constituents to engage with the exercise as well.

Time is running out: the consultation closes on Sunday, April 9.

From the strength of opposition expressed so coherently by those at the public meetings, local elected officials and our councils, I cannot see how the Clinical Commissioning Group will be able to take their proposals forward.

Real life experiences should inform decisions about the future organisation of healthcare in Oxfordshire



Reader Offers

SAILING FROM TILBURY ON ASTORIA, COLUMBUS





Spain, Portugal & France Cruise

13 days from £919 Sailing from Tilbury on board Columbus, 2 October 2017

Catch some autumn warmth as you head 'south to the sun', enjoying all the pleasures of cruising, Columbus-style, and some fascinating ports of call.

Cruise highlights

- The Dutch capital Amsterdam is a city of canals and cobblestones
- La Rochelle France's seaside town
- ✓ Basque citadel Bilbao boasts the astonishing Guggenheim Museum
- ✓ Portuguese capital Lisbon ✓ Pay a visit to Gibraltar
- ✓ Spain's La Coruña exudes
- maritime history
- ✓ Traditional British & International cuisine, stylish entertainment, guest lecturers & on-board leisure facilities
- √ 12 nights' full board accommodation on board Columbus

*Book by 30 April 2017. Offer subject to availability & may be withdrawn at any time. Price shown is the new reduced fare

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11 days from £499 Sailing from Tilbury on board Astoria, 1 **April 2017**

Join this glorious 'Round Britain' adventure on board intimate Astoria.

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- beautiful Isle of Lewis ✓ Discover "Mull's pretty Tobermory
- ✓ The stunning Isles of Scilly
- ✓ Guernsey beautiful island!
- ✓ Discover Honfleur, in Normandy
- ✓ Traditional British & International cuisine, stylish entertainment, guest lecturers & on-board leisure facilities
- 10 nights' full board accommodation on board Astoria

Book by 30 April 2017. Offer subject to availability & may be withdrawn at any time. Price shown is the new reduced fare.





CakeLeisure

banburycake.co.uk/leisure

Film fires emotional blanks

FREE FIRE (15, 91 mins) Action/ Comedy/Thriller. Sharlto Copley, Armie Hammer, Brie Larson, Cillian Murphy, Jack Reynor, Babou Ceesay, Enzo Cilenti, Sam Riley, Michael Smiley, Noah Taylor. Director: Ben Wheatley. ESSEX-born filmmaker Ben

Wheatley gets into a Reservoir Dogs groove with this giddily entertaining shoot-out set in a 1978 Boston warehouse that draws blood with breathless action sequences as well as verbal grenades.

The trigger-happy free-for-all becomes wearisome before the final bullet reaches its intended target, and sinewy subplots to connect characters sometimes feel contrived, but as an exercise in controlled mayhem, Free Fire hits more than it misses

A rich vein of jet black humour courses beneath the surface of each exchange of gunfire and the script delights in upending gender stereotypes by casting Oscar-winner Brie Larson as the solitary woman in a hyperviolent world of testosterone-crazed fools.

Chris (Cillian Murphy) and fellow Irishman Frank (Michael Smiley) need to source several cases of M16 rifles to arm their

IRA brethren.
They head to an abandoned warehouse to complete a deal flanked by hired muscle Bernie (Enzo Cilenti) and Stevo (Sam Riley), under the escort of suave American middle man Ord (Armie Hammer) and his sassy associate, Justine (Larson).

The suppliers are emotionally volatile South African dealer Vernon (Sharlto Copley) and his Black Panther associate Martin (Babou Ceesay), who have drafted in two stooges – Harry (Jack Reynor) and Gordon (Noah Taylor) - to even the numbers.
The exchange goes sour when

Vernon attempts to palm off AR-70 assault rifles in place of the promised weapons.

deflects sexist barbs aimed to undermine her position.

"I'm IIFM – in it for myself," she calmly reminds both sides

When bullets fly as a result of an unfortunate personal connection, fragile alliances disintegrate, rivalries resurface and Vernon loses his slender grasp on reality.

Free Fire sets out its action-oriented intentions, reducing most of the cast to the shuffling wounded.

Copley overacts with wild abandon, largely to comic effect, while Murphy and Larson spark a simmering on-screen chemistry that thankfully never boils over into a superfluous dalliance.

The film's enduring romance is between hot-headed men and their loaded weapons.

Unlike many of the characters,

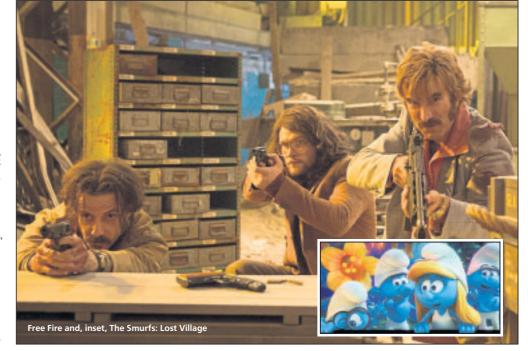
THE SMURFS: LOST VILLAGE (U, 90 mins) Animation/Comedy/ Action. Featuring the voices of Demi Lovato, Joe Manganiello, Jack McBrayer, Danny Pudi, Rainn Wilson, Julia Roberts, Michelle Rodriguez, Ellie Kemper, Ariel Winter, Mandy Patinkin. Director: Kelly Asbury.

A SMURF in need is a Smurf indeed in director Kelly Asbury's family-friendly comedy, which reboots the misadventures of the cute blue creatures created by Belgian

illustrator Peyo.

The Smurfs: Lost Village
abandons the uneasy conflation of live action and digital trickery, which dogged previous Smurf feature films, and settles on computer animation to render the colour-saturated escapades of Papa Smurf and his three-inch tall kin.
Asbury's picture adopts a

strongly female-centric storyline in the hope of mimicking the success of Disney's Frozen, Zootropolis, Finding Dory and Moana, but



muddles its core message of female empowerment and independence.

On the one hand, Stacey Harman and Pamela Ribon's simplistic script emphasises that a young woman isn't handcuffed to her past. She will be judged by her sensitive deeds. Yet for each rallying cry to girls to boldly shape their destiny, the film fails to articulate the internal conflict of heroine Smurfette and frequently relies on male protagonists to move the narrative forwards

Humour is skewed towards the very young, and adults may be mimicking the actions of Sleepy Smurf or Grouchy Smurf before the end credits roll.

Up and at 'em

The job you always dreamed of as a child could be a reality. Rather than wishing you were somewhere else, go grab it and start looking forward to Monday mornings.

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Cake Bookworm

is published in hardback by Granta Books, priced £12.99 (ebook £8.04)

THE story of immigrants fleeing their motherlands for thewealthier West is a pertinent one for our times. However, in The Patriots, the impressive debut novel from Sana Krasikov, the tables are turned. Florence Fein is a New Yorker, an idealist who turns her back on capitalist America and sets sail in 1934 for Stalin's Soviet Union, seduced by its classless society, gender equality, and for love.
When Moscow chips at Florence's perceived idyll, it's too late to leave. Krasikov, who grew up in the Republic of Georgia and is a resident of the US, has done her history homework: *The Patriots* is both detailed and sweeping in its storytelling. A multi-generational political thriller, it weaves between Florence and her son, Julian (who provides a second thread in Putin's

modern-day Russia) to expose the consequences of the mother's actions on her child.

A Natural by Ross Raisin is published in hardback by Jonathan Cape, priced £14.99 (ebook £9.99)

FOOTBALL might be our national sport, but relatively few books are dedicated to the beautiful game. Even scarcer are those set in English football's lower rungs. It's here in League Two that acclaimed British author Ross Raisin sets his new novel. Tom Pearman, a oncepromising England youth player, is coming to terms with a new life at Town, a club languishing at the bottom of the table, and with his own sexuality. This is matched with the struggles of Leah Easter, the captain's wife, who realises her own dreams have been substituted for her husband's career. There are visceral moments, but the storytelling purposely avoids Messi like flourishes, meaning it can often feel like sitting in the gods, away from the action, instead of being immersed on the sidelines.

A Simple Favour by Darcey Bell is published in hardback by Macmillan, priced £12.99 (ebook £1.89)

HOT on the heels of thrillers like Gone Girl, The Girl On The Train and Lie With Me is another domestic thriller with unreliable narrators. This debut, written by Chicago-based pre-school teacher Bell, is based around the story of two best friends – a widow and stay-at-home mum blogger Stephanie, and a successful and glamorous PR executive, Emily, whose five-year-old sons are best friends. When Emily asks Stephanie to pick up her son from school, she agrees but she doesn't come back and Emily knows she would never leave her son. Whilst this thriller is fast-moving, readable and packed with twists and turns, parts of the plot felt forced and too far-fetched.

Travel

Reader Offers



Cruise from Tilbury on board Columbus



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Cruise	Departure Date	Duration	1st Passenger	2nd Passenger	
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Grand Baltic Cities & St Petersburg	16 May 2018	15 days	£2,139	FREE	
Iceland & the Northern Isles	6 Jun 2018	13 days	£1,829	FREE	
Grand British Isles Discovery	18 Jun 2018	13 days	£1,829	FREE	
Majestic Fjordland	30 Jun 2018	9 days	£1,219	FREE	
British Isles Discovery	8 Jul 2018	13 days	£1,829	FREE	
Majestic Fjordland	24 Aug 2018	8 days	£1,069	FREE	
Summer Grand British Isles Discovery	31 Aug 2018	13 days	£1,829	FREE	
Baltic Cities & St Petersburg	12 Sept 2018	14 days	£1,979	FREE	
British Isles & Cities Discovery	25 Sept 2018	11 days	11 days £1,489		
Autumn Majestic Fjordland	5 Oct 2018	5 Oct 2018 8 days £1,019		FREE	
Canary Islands & Madeira	12 Oct 2018	16 days	£2,109	FREE	
European Cities Break	28 Oct 2018	6 days	£709	FREE	

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Cruise	Departure Date	Duration	1st Passenger	2nd Passenger	
Whitsun Fjordland	30 May 2018	8 days	£1,019	FREE	
Canary Islands & Madeira	20 Jul 2018	16 days	£2,179	FREE	
Majestic Fjordland	4 Aug 2018	8 days	£1,069	FREE	
Baltic Cities & St Petersburg	11 Aug 2018	14 days	£1,979	FREE	

Call 0330 160 7730 quoting OXS or visit newmarketholidays.co.uk/oxs





Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

Coles Book Club: Coles Books, 4 Crown Walk, Bicester, An evening with Emma Kennedy, author of Shoes for Anthony. 7pm. £7.99 (cost of book). 01869 320779.

Family Canal Art Trail: Museum of Oxford, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's Oxford, A themed activity sheet to guide families around the museum. Find out about the history of Oxford's canal through objects in the Explore Oxford Gallery. 10am. Free. 01865 252334.

Glee Club UK Adult Community Choir: Wantage CE Primary School, Newbury Street, Wantage. Learn Glee Club UK versions of rock and pop songs. 7.30pm. Free first session then £18.50 a month 07900 210969

Grove RFC Girls' Rugby: Grove RFC, Recreation Lane, Grove. Contact rugby union for girls aged 11-18 in three age groups. 7pm. Annual membership £85 after three free sessions. 07970292322. **Learn Fly Fishing:** Orvis, 80 High Street, Burford. For beginners of all ages, the course includes free lessons on fly casting and outfit rigging. 10am. Free. 01993 823566.

Nursery Open Morning: Long Furlong Primary School, Boulter Drive, Abingdon. 9.15am, Free, 01235 532358,

The Seven Letters Book Signing: The Manor, Northampton Road, Westonon-the-Green. Meet the author of The Seven Letters, Jan Harvey, and buy a signed book. There will be packages of seven letters, containing very special offers reserved for the first 20 that RSVP. 7pm. Free. 01869 350621

FRIDAY

Knit Knot & Natter: Vale & Downland Museum, 19 Church Street, Wantage. Bring along your own project and receive tuition in crafts such as knitting, crochet and weaving. 1.30pm. Free but asked to support the museum cafe. 01235

Museum Book Group: Vale & Downland Museum, 19 Church Street, Wantage, 2pm, Free but asked to support the museum cafe. 01235 771447. Quiz Night: The Dupuis Centre Dashwood Road, Banbury. 8pm. £3. 07785 235715.

Water: A Precious (and finite) Resource and AGM: Wallingford Methodist Hall, St Leonards Square, Wallingford. Prof Richard Harding on 'Oxfordshire's water – Too much, too little, or both?' Talk followed by Sustainable Wallingford's AGM @ 8pm. Finger buffet and discussion to finish. 7pm. Free. 01491 201229.

SATURDAY

April Pitt Stop - Brilliant Body Arts: Pitt Rivers Museum, South Parks Road, Oxford. Be inspired by body decoration from around the world. Create your own piece of jewellery. Free drop-in session for children aged 5+ but all ages welcome. Please ensure that all children are accompanied by an adult. 1pm. Free. 01865 270927

Bitten Street: Oxford Castle Quarter, New Road, Oxford. Monthly street food event. 11am. Free.

Fascinators: No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. Make a fascinator using vintage fabrics, vintage buttons, Japanese fabrics and embellishments Booking essential. 10am. £30. 01235 511550

Fritwell School Easter Egg Hunt: Fritwell School, East Street, Fritwell Annual Easter Egg hunt including a hunt for the Crystal Egg to win the top prize. Also a fluffy rabbit tombola, tombola, pick a stick, hook a duck, arts and crafts in the hall, mini Easter trail for young children, refreshment stall and Easter hat children over 1, £1 adult.

Fundraising Family Fun Day: Ardley and Fewcott Village Hall, Bicester, Fundraiser for Katherine House Hospice with fairground, bouncy castle, disco, small petting zoo, face painting and a visit from Spiderman. 1pm. Free. 07783

Lambing Weekend: Earth Trust, Little Wittenham. Meet lambs, piglets, goats and more. Craft activities and refreshments available. 11 am. £7 adult, £3 child, £17 family, 01865 407792.

North Moreton Book Sale: Village Hall, Bear Lane, Didcot. Book donations welcome, Call 01235 818544 to arrange collection. 10am.

Pamper Evening: Ardley and Fewcott Hall, Ardley. An evening of pampering treatments, manicures and massages 5pm. Free. 07783 414127.

SAFE! takes on the Monster Race: Cornbury Park, Charlbury. SAFE! is a local charity that supports young people aged between eight-25, throughout the Thames Valley who have been victims of crime. £200 fundraising target. 10am. 5km £47 or 10km £52. 01865 582495. Spring Craft Fair: Wootton & Dry Sandford Community Centre, Lamborough Hill, Wootton. 1pm. £1 adults, children free. 01235 532816.

SUNDAY

Amnesty International Sponsored Walk: Start at Oxford Castle, New Road, Oxford, Fight-mile walk, Meet at Oxford Castle, walk through Christchurch Meadow and along the Thames Path past Osney and Godstow to Swinford Toll Bridge, Families and dogs welcome. 10am. Donations and sponsor money

Cheeki Monkeys Big Baby & Children's Markets: Corn Exchange, Market Place, Faringdon. Pop-up baby and children's nearly new sale and market and fun family day out, 1pm, £1 entry for adults kids go free. 07921 397097

Ewelme Watercress Beds and Nature Reserve Guided Walk: Watercress Centre, The Street, Ewelme. 10,30am. £3 adults, accompanied

children free. Freeland W.I. Easter Market: Freeland Village Hall, Wroslyn Road, Witney Free 2pm Free

National Garden Scheme: Buckland Lakes, Buckland, Faringdon. Descend down wooded path to two large secluded lakes with views of undulating historic parkland, designed by Georgian landscape architect, Richard Woods. Picturesque mid-C18 rustic icehouse. cascade with iron footbridge, thatched boathouse and round house, and renovated exedra. Dogs on leads. Homemade teas in Memorial Hall. Coaches welcome, 2pm, Adult; £5, chd free,

Nearly New Sale and Children's Event: Didcot Civic Hall Britewell Boad Didcot. 10.30am. £1. 07763 720719. Witney Wedding Fayre: African Children's Fund, 15 Corn Street, Witney. 10am. Free. 01993 705272.

MONDAY

Masons Apron Northwest Morris: Recreation Hall, Main Street, Long Hanborough. Masons Apron Ladies Northwest Morris. 8.15pm. £5 annual fee plus £2 per week. 01993 200717.

Women's Self Defence and Fitness Class: The Pavilion, Roosevelt Road, Long Hanborough. Ages from 13 upwards. 8pm. £5. 07834 022463.

TUESDAY

Craft session: No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. Have a go at a variety of crafts and you pay what you think the evening was worth. 7pm. 01235 511550. **Beaded earrings:** No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. Make four pairs of

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

beaded earrings. Booking required, 7pm. £18. 01235 511550.

WEDNESDAY

Floristry - Easter arrangements: No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. A daytime opportunity to learn the basics of floristry and create an Easter arrangement. All materials included 10am, £28, 01235 511550.

Katherine Grainger - is confidence born, bred or bluffed?: Oxford Brookes University, John Henry Brookes Building, Headington Road. Oxford. Dr Katherine Grainger's inaugural lecture as Chancellor of Oxford Brookes unlocks the secrets of confidence. Where does self-confidence come from? Are people born with it? Can it be taught or learned? Katherine uses a range of examples from her own life and elsewhere to answer these questions. 6pm. Free.

Music

THURSDAY

St Frideswide Church, Botley Road, Osney: Organ recital. Cynthia Hall. £5. Includes a glass of wine/juice and nibbles, 7.30pm, 01865 722070.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: The AC/DC Experie AC/DC Tribute band, 7pm, £13.

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Jasper Høiby's Fellow Creatures The Spin Jazz Club Jazz quintet. 8.30pm. £12, £10 (concs), £8

SJE Arts at the church of S. John the Evangelist, 109 Iffley Road, Oxford: Lewis Watson, Slowlights. Local folk-pop singer on UK tour. 7pm. £12.50. The Jericho Tavern, 56 Walton Street, Oxford: Momento, Juniper Nights, Moon Drive #71, Bedford & Balham. Folk-rock and pop. 7pm. £7.

FRIDAY

Banbury Cross, Butchers Row, Banbury: Bruiser, Four-piece rock and pop covers band. Free. 9pm. 01295

Carterton Social Centre, Brownes Lane, Carterton: Country & Western Dance with the. Danny Lee Band. £6. 8.30nm 01993.850682

Coty Arms, High Street, Burford: Marley Motown. Free. 9pm. 01993 822227

Lord Nelson, Charlton Road, Wantage: Glam Res. Tribute to glam rock. Free. 9pm. 01235 763415.

Methodist Church, Newbury Street. Wantage: Concert by Caritas Children's Choir in aid of Christian Aid. £7 adults, children free. 7pm. 01235 768505. St Laurence Church, St Lawrence

Road, South Hinksey: A Trip Round the Tradition. A concert of light-hearted, traditional tunes performed in aid of the Oxford branch of Parkinson's UK. £5. 7:.0pm. 01865 739469.

The Northcourt, Northcourt Road. Abingdon: The Stones. Rolling Stones tribute. £12 advance, £14 door. 7.30pm 01235 203203

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Ash Lewis, Screaming Culture, Dirt Miles, Rad Roach. Folk-punk and altrock, 7,30pm, £5,

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Bill Kirchen and Austin de Lone Blues and country veterans. 7pm. £13 (adv), £15 (otd).

Richard Benson Hall, 276 Cowley

Road, Oxford: Samantha Twigg Johnson, Laura Theis, Rosie Caldecott, Jenny Larsen and Laveroc. Refugee Resource Benefit, 8-10pm, £7.50.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Temper Cartel, Tom Ivey, The Outside, Freemantle. Rock & blues.

SATURDAY

All Saints Church, Church Lane, Faringdon: Faringdon Singers Spring Concert. Programme includes Mozart's Requiem, Motets by Bruckner and Lotti and an organ solo Free. 7.30pm. 01367 241707

Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot: Roger McGough and Little Machine. £16, concs £14, members £12. 7.30pm. 01235

General Foods SC, Spiceball Park, **Banbury:** Backin 4. Covers band. 9pm. 01295 252852.

St Peter's Church, Newlands **Avenue, Didcot:** Unbroken Praise. Didcot Community Gospel Choir's spring concert. £8/£5 concessions. 6.30pm. 07745 802030

Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, High Street, Uffington: Stick in the Wheel & John Spiers. £12. 7.30pm. 01367 820282.

Wantage Parish Church, Church Square, Wantage: Wantage Choral Society Concert, £12(£10 advance). 7.30pm. 01235 798349.

Yolande Paterson Hall, School of St Helen and St Katherine, Faringdon Road, Abingdon: Choral Concert. £12 on door; £10 in advance; £1 children. 730pm 01235 521392 The Catherine Wheel, Henley Road,

Sandford-on-Thames: Hippy Haze. Flower power covers band, 8pm, Free The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Jizzy Pearl's Love/Hate, Bulletproof Rose. The Black Bullets.

Hell's Gazelles, Molotov Sexbomb. US hard rock veteran. 7pm. £15 (adv), £20 Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre, 10

Littlegate Street, St Ebbe's, Oxford: Megan Henwood, Art Theefe, Richard Neuberg Rosie Caldecott Count Drachma. The Catweazle Club. 7.30pm.

The Jericho Tavern, 56 Walton Street, Oxford: Winter Mountain. 7.30pm. £5 (£4 adv).

SUNDAY

All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay, Sutton Courtenay: All Saints' Singers, Passiontide concert of Baroque music. £12. 7.30pm. 01235 848205

St Nicolas Church, Market Place, Abingdon: Wind serenades by Gounod and Mozart. £10 (£9). 3pm. 07775 904626

Buckland: Faringdon Singers Spring Concert. £10. 7pm. 01367 870381. Rose And Crown, 14 North Parade Avenue, Oxford: Frank Williams Trio.

St Mary the Virgin Church,

Jazz 7nm Free Oxford Wine Café, 38 South Parade Summertown: Rebecca Poole Quartet. Vocals, trumpet, guitar and bass. Jazz. 6.30-9pm. Free.

MONDAY

Village Club, High Street, Nettlebed: Feast of Fiddles 24th Annual Spring Tour at Nettlebed Folk Club. £20.

8pm. 01628 636620.

Rose Revived, Newbridge, Witney: Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited. Jazz. Free. 7.30pm. 01865 300221.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Alejandro Escovedo. US punk singer-songwriter. 7.30pm. £15 (adv),

TUESDAY

The Queen's College Chapel, High Street, Oxford: Lent Concert. Free admission with a retiring collection. 6.15pm. 01865 279125.

WEDNESDAY

Brill Sports and Social Club, Church Road, Brill: Jubilee Jazz Band. Free. 8.30pm. 01844 237237

St Mary's Church, Church Way, Iffley, Oxford: Blackbird Leys Choir Spring Concert. A choral evening of songs connected to the British Isles.

The White Hart, 126 Godstow Road, Wolvercote: Trish Elphinstone Quintet with Mike Wilkins. Live jazz featuring Mike Wilkins on tenor saxophone. 8.45pm. £3 voluntary donations.

Theatre

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Apr 8, Darius Davies, Tom Deacon, Andrew Ryan and Chris McCausland. Glee comedy. 7.45pm.

£15.95. 01865 810000. **Burton Taylor Studio, Beaumont** Street, Oxford: Until Mar 30, All the Little Lights. 7.30pm. £10. Mar 31, In Tents and Purposes. Roxy Dunn and Alys Metcalf tell a comic, time-hopping story. 7.30pm. £10 (£8). Apr 1, Bright Sparks. 11am and 2pm. £8. Apr 3, Heads Up. 7.30pm. £10 (£8). 01865

The Old Fire Station, 40 George **Street, Oxford:** Mar 30, *Jonny & The Baptists: Eat the Poor.* £12. 8pm. Mar 31, Rachel Parris: Best Laid Plans. £12. 8pm, 01865 263990.

The Old Library, The University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Radcliffe Square, Oxford: Until Apr 1, Brontë. A play by Polly Teale.

Thistledown Theatre presents a play evoking the real and imagined worlds of the Brontës, as their fictional characters come to haunt their creators. In conjunction with the run of this show, the Vaults and Garden Cafe will be open for a pre-show supper each evening from 6pm. 7.30pm. £12/10 (£22/20 with supper).

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford: Mar 31-Apr 1, Jane Eyre. Fri 8pm, Sat 2.30pm and 8pm. £16. 01865 305305.

New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: Until Apr 1 Grease 730pm £15-£51.50 plus £4 transaction fee. 0844 871 7615

The North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown: Mar 30, A Home Unpacked. A collaboration between artist Adrian Brooks and writer/ performer Shane Anderson which explores stories of home through a fusion of theatre and handcrafted objects. 6.30pm, Free, Apr 7-9, Alchymy Festival, Festival of new writing. See website for

Chipping Norton Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton: Mar 30, Flat

details, 01865 319450.

73. 7.45pm. £14. 01608 642350. Corn Exchange, Market Place, Wallingford: Until Apr 1, Outside Edge. A cricketing comedy by Richard Harris

presented by Sinodun Players. 7.30pm £10. 01491 825000. Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station

Road, Didcot: Mar 31, Incognito. Flamenco dance company. 7.30pm. £16. 01235 515144.

The Beacon, Portway, Wantage: Apr 5-8, Made in Dagenham. 7.30pm. £14. 01235 763456.

CakeSport banburycake.co.uk/sport

Banbury's bid is dented in defeat

Puritans' play-off chances knocked by Stratford loss

BANBURY United's Premier Division play-off hopes suffered a huge setback as they lost 2-0 at Stratford Town.

The Puritans went behind in the sixth minute of the Evo-Stik Southern League clash, when Will Grocott opened the scoring. Mike Ford's men controlled the

play for long periods, but it was Stratford who doubled their lead.

Wayne Thomas's fierce shot was well saved by goalkeeper Jack Harding, but Mike Taylor knocked home the loose ball.

In stoppage time, it was close to being 3-0 when Harding saved well from Taylor's header.

Banbury had a penalty appeal turned down in the 52nd minute when Manny Duku appeared to

FOOTBALL

be brought down, but was instead booked for simulation.

In the 82nd minute it looked as though Banbury had found a way back into the game when Stratford's Justin Marsden handled the ball inside the penalty area.

But Ricky Johnson's spot-kick was saved by Cooper's legs. Banbury Utd: Harding, Odhiambo, Bradbury, Martin (Self HT), Westbrook, Carnell, McEachran, Nash, Johnson, Duku (McDonagh 62), Winters (Bell 83). Subs not used: Blackstock, Humphreys. Attendance: 417.

 BANBURY'S Oxfordshire Senior Cup semi-final against Oxford United will be played at Oxford City on Tuesday, April 4, after the tie was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch last week

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE mier Division PWDLFAPts

Chippenham Tn	41	27	10	4	85	44	91
Learnington	40	25	10	5	71	24	85
Hitchin Tn	41	24	10	7	73	37	82
Slough Tn	41	25	5	11	79	49	80
Merthyr Tn	41	21	13	7	80	38	76
Banbury Utd Frome Tn Biggleswade Tn Kettering Tn Chesham Utd Weymouth King's Lynn Tn Basingstoke Tn Dunstable Tn St Ives Tn Stratford Tn Stratford Tn St. Neots Tn Kings Langley	41 41 41 41 41 41 41 41 41 41 41 41 41	18 18 18 18 13 13 16 15 13 11 13 12 12 9		12 10 13 14 14 11 12 20 21 17 15 20 21 21 24 21	62 76 76 75 62 70 55 55 43 44 55 51 47 59	35 61 54 60 51 53 61 66 59 64 60 69 74 93 70	73 67 64 63 56 55 53 50 48 47 44 41 38
Cirencester Tn	41	9		23	48	85	36
Hayes & Y	40	8		21	40	72	35
Cambridge City	40	7		23	37	72	31



Banbury's Manny Duku was booked for simulation against Stratford

Below-par Bulls suffer at Bassett

RUGBY UNION

BANBURY fell to a disappointing 39-19 loss at Royal Wootton Bassett in South West 1 East.

Cash Chilvers crashed over early on for Bulls, but the home side slowly gained a foothold and led 13-7, thanks to two tries and a penalty.

Bassett's dominance continued and four further tries made it 39-7. But Banbury found some form in the final 20 minutes, with tries from Chilvers and Jimmy Manley making the final score 39-19.

South West 1 East								
	P	W	D	L	F	Α	Pts	
Maidenhead	23	19	0	4	826	410	98	
Old Patesians	23	19	0	4	624	363	91	
Newbury Blues	23	18	1	4	710	363	90	
Witney	23	12	0	11	484	535	62	
Old Centralians	23	11	2	10	578	554	62	
Banbury	23	11	1	11	487	555	55	
Grove	23	10	1	12	438	513	54	
RI Wootton Bassett	23	10	0	13	492	460	50	
Oxford Hquins	23	10	1	12	428	588	48	
Swindon	23	9	0	14	460	512	48	
Reading Abbey	23	9	1	13	401	463	45	
Chippenham	23	8	0	15	509	662	45	
Windsor	23	8	1	14	421	608	44	
Reading	23	3	0	20	277	549	20	

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0906 585 4360 0906 585 4366



TAURUS Apr 20-Moy 20
Nothing that happens this week is by accident, but someone out of their way to try to prove to you that fate wants you to be will you fall for this or will you fall for the some round naturally. It's the key to you feeling like you again. I know will you fall for this or will you fall for the younger faces are the bearers of really the facts you need to know to make life and love more interesting for you

Family have not been making it easy for you to be honest with them with the pressure they have been placing on you. Be fair to you and tell it like it is. You have every right to live your life it way you want to like it and the sooner you realise this, the sooner you wall got the respect.

I know you're not feeling as strong as you should, but you've been through a lot. Try to give yourself the time and space you need to be you again. When did you last take soomer the time Sagitatrius. Someone from your past comes to mind with something you find or do. Know how far I know you're not feeling as strong as you should, but you've been through a lot. Try to give yourself the time and space you need to be you again. When did you last take soomer the time and space you need to be you again. When did you last take soomer the time and space you need to be you again. When did you last take soomer the time and space you need to be you again. When did you last take soomer time time as you should, but you've been through a lot. Try to give yourself the time and space you need to be you again. When did you last take soomer time Sagitarius. Someone from your past of the provided in the provided in the your past of the time and space you need to be you again. When did you last take soomer time time as past of the your past of the provided in the your past of the your past of

Wednesday, Ring now so I can show you how great the future is. back on top in your career again.

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70906 585 4362 **7**0906 585 4368

Those you thought would let you down are set to pleasantly

Lon1 lose faith in your close ones this week and oort take

"Inch you ang ive after the every enotive month; you have had, are you my

"Inch you can give after the every enotive month; you have had, are you my

"Inch you can give after the every enotive month; you have had, are you my

"Inch you can give after the every enotive month; you have had a feet and the expensive set of the expe

indeed. Ring now to reveal more emotive week you race.

Jul 23-Aug 22 🐴 AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

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VIRGO Aug 23-5ep 22

Money issues come under the spollight and you start to see alt's possible instead of what's not. You no longer run after those who red find in you. You realise what you need to make yourself happer, because on what you want and need. It's the key to you making your in entiring you have not previously been albe to take into consideration.

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